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CCC INTEREST RATE FOR AUGUST 6-3/8 PERCENT

WASHINGTON, Aug. 1—Commodity loans disbursed in August by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Commodity Credit Corporation will carry a 6-3/8 percent interest rate, according to Keith Bjerke, executive vice president of the CCC.

The 6-3/8 percent interest rate is up from July's 6-1/4 percent and reflects the interest rate charged CCC by the U.S. Treasury in August.

Robert Feist (202) 557-6789

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COTTON RESEARCH AND PROMOTION PROGRAM AMENDMENTS APPROVED

WASHINGTON, Aug. 2—U.S. cotton producers and importers voted in a U.S. Department of Agriculture-monitored referendum July 17-26 to adopt amendments to the Cotton Research and Promotion Order, the set of regulations implementing the 1966 Cotton Research and Promotion Act.

Daniel D. Haley, administrator of USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service, said the major amendments provide for:

- importer representation on the Cotton Board (the body executing programs of the 1966 Cotton Research and Promotion Act which the order implements);

- assessing imported cotton and cotton products, the assessments to be remitted to the Cotton Board as in the case of domestic cotton: and

- terminating the right of producers to demand a refund of assessments.

The amendments originate in provisions of the 1990 Farm Bill, which also required they be put to referendum, with passage to be contingent on approval by a simple majority of those voting.

Of 46,220 valid responses, 27,879, or 60 percent, of those voting, favored the amendments, and 18,341, or 40 percent, opposed, Haley said.

Sixty one percent of the growers voting and 39 percent of the importers voting favored the amendments.

Six hundred twenty five importers and 45,595 growers voted in the mail referendum, which USDA’s Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service conducted.

A chart of grower votes, by state, is attached.

Outcome of July 17-26 Cotton Research and Promotion Referendum

State	Percent Yes	Percent No
Alabama	68	32
Arizona	76	24
Arkansas	53	47
California	73	27
Florida	29	71
Georgia	79	21
Kansas	89	11
Louisiana	44	56
Mississippi	63	37
Missouri	53	47
New Mexico	73	27
North Carolina	89	11
Oklahoma	63	37
South Carolina	81	19
Tennessee	39	61
Texas	60	40
Virginia	85	15

Clarence Steinberg (202) 447-6179

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USDA WILL NOT ADJUST 1992 WHEAT ACREAGE REDUCTION PROGRAM

WASHINGTON, Aug. 2—Secretary of Agriculture Edward Madigan announced today there will be no adjustment in the 5-percent acreage reduction program for wheat in 1992 that was announced May 31.

The secretary is authorized to make adjustments in the 1992 program by July 31 if it is determined that the total supply of wheat has changed significantly since the 1992 acreage reduction program was first announced.

“We received positive responses regarding our initial announcement of a 5-percent acreage reduction program for the 1992 wheat crop,” Madigan said. “The expected supply-demand balance has changed little since the end of May and we see no need to change the program level. We continue to believe that the 5-percent level provides the best balance for producers and consumers of U.S. wheat and for U.S. taxpayers.”

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THEFT OF THREATENED PLANTS HINDERS RECOVERY EFFORT

WASHINGTON, Aug. 5—A theft of rare plants from a national forest in Illinois may significantly hinder efforts to save the threatened Mead’s milkweed, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Forest Service.

Forest Service Chief F. Dale Robertson said law enforcement officials from the Forest Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service are investigating the plant theft. The Shawnee National Forest has offered a \$5,000 reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the plant thieves. Robertson said an entire population of Mead’s milkweed was stolen from the Shawnee National Forest in mid-June, including both wild plants and young plants recently planted through a cooperative reintroduction effort. The plant is listed by the federal government as threatened under the endangered Species Act.

Mead’s milkweed is an important remnant of the tallgrass prairie which was once prevalent in much of the midwest, though much of its habitat has been converted to other uses. The Shawnee National Forest site was

one of only six places where the plant was known to exist in the Eastern United States, and is the “premier site for reintroducing the plant in its native habitat,” Robertson said.

Mead’s milkweed has been the focus of a national cooperative recovery effort involving the Forest Service; the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; the Morton Arboretum in Lisle, Ill; and the Illinois Department of Conservation.

Robertson said that botanists fear the theft of the plant may have compromised the recovery effort for the species. “This is a major setback for our cooperative efforts to reestablish the species east of the Mississippi River,” Robertson said. “We’re going to have to redouble our efforts if we’re going to be successful.” He said additional Mead’s milkweed plants grown at the Morton Arboretum will be replanted at the damaged site, and other possible sites for the milkweed will be restored and planted as well.

Chris Holmes (202) 205 1006

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U.S. DONATES CORN AND SORGHUM TO PERU

WASHINGTON, Aug. 5—The U.S. Department of Agriculture will donate 86,500 metric tons of corn and 30,000 metric tons of sorghum to Peru, according to Duane Acker, administrator of USDA’s Foreign Agricultural Service.

The \$13.3-million donation will be sold by the Peruvian government to private sector feed millers, and livestock and poultry producers for the production of feed. The proceeds will be used to provide food assistance to the needy and to fund income-generating and developmental activities, primarily in the agricultural sector. These activities include improving rural sanitation rehabilitating agricultural infrastructure and working to increase agricultural production. The supply period is fiscal year 1991.

The donation was made under Section 416(b) of the Agricultural Act of 1949, which authorizes the donation of surplus commodities owned by the Commodity Credit Corporation to needy people overseas. The program is carried out by the U.S. Agency for International Development, acting as the agent of USDA’S Commodity Credit Corporation.

For more information, contact James F. Keefer, FAS (202) 382-9263.

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A KOREAN LADY BUG AND A SMALLER BEETLE MAY SPELL DOOM TO GARDEN SCALE

WASHINGTON—A lady beetle and a smaller beetle, both from Asia, may become the first major natural controls for scale pests of ornamental trees and bushes, according to a U.S. Department of Agriculture scientist.

“Scale insects affix themselves to plants with their needle-like mouthparts. They literally milk the plant dry of sap,” said John J. Drea, entomologist for USDA’s Agricultural Research Service at Beltsville, Md.

“Scale pests that attack euonymus plants rank as one of the most insidious enemies of trees and bushes in the United States,” he said.

Euonymus plants rank twelfth among the 20 most common ornamental plants used in the multi-billion dollar landscaping industry. Among the most popular types of euonymus plants are the strawberry bush and the burning bush. The plants can be deciduous or evergreen and can be grown for ground cover, hedges, ornamental vines, shrubs and trees.

The scale infects 30 other types of plants including pachysandra, hibiscus and camellia, in addition to most species of euonymus, Drea said.

The two Asian beetles “lay their eggs under the body of the euonymus scale and in cracks of the bark or other protected places on the host plant,” said Drea. “When larvae hatch, they feed voraciously for about three weeks on the scale pest and their offspring.”

Over the last eight years, field studies in 20 states have shown that the beetles “took hold and quickly all but eliminated the scale from many test plots,” Drea said. “In several spots the beetles decimated the scale population and then the beetles disappeared.”

The beneficial beetles returned several years later when the pest reappeared, he said. “Where the beetles went during the interim is not known, but they came back when they were needed.”

Based on the success of this research, USDA’s Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service recently funded a national project for biological control of euonymus scale. ARS, several universities, and private industry will cooperate in the project. It will be coordinated by the APHIS laboratory in Niles, Mich., and will include several species of tiny wasps and predators that also attack euonymus scale in Asia.

Niles lab workers have planted 500 plants representing three species of euonymus on a one-acre site. They plan to infest the plot with scale to

colonize populations of the pest's natural enemies.

These natural enemies will be mass reared, distributed by the Niles lab and evaluated throughout the country.

“If successful, this project will demonstrate the tremendous potential for controlling nursery and ornamental pests using their natural enemies,” Drea said. “This field of research—for nursery and ornamental pests—has received little, if any, consideration in the past.”

The two beneficial beetles were found by R.C. Carlson, an entomologist then stationed at the ARS Asian Parasite Laboratory in Seoul, South Korea, in 1981, said Drea. The lab—one of four operated by ARS to search for and study natural enemies of many insect and weed pests—tested the beetles that same year. Both beetles and the scale are natives of Asia.

The female scale (*Unaspis euonymi*) is slightly brownish, about 1/16 of an inch long and shaped like an oyster shell. As many as four generations of this pest can reproduce in a year depending on the climate.

As the female scale grows, she forms a hard wax-like armour—the scale—under which she lays her eggs. She never moves again.

“A severe infestation can kill branches and the plant itself—a serious problem in established landscapes,” Drea said. “About 68 percent of the euonymus plants in a survey of Maryland homesites had severe problems due mainly to the scale.”

To control the scale chemically, diazinon, carbaryl or malathion are often used. However, pesticides are effective only for a very short time during the insect's lifecycle—they are unable to get through the scale's shell-like armour, he said.

According to Drea, one of the enemies of the scale is the Korean lady beetle (*Chilocorus kuwanae*). It is shiny black with a red spot on each wing cover or side. Both sexes look similar and are difficult to differentiate without a microscope.

The other beetle is a 1/25-of-an-inch-long nitidulid (*Cybocephalus nipponicus*). The female is all black. Males have dull yellow heads and black backs.

From 1983 to 1990, Drea and former ARS entomologist Robert M. Hendrickson, Jr., at the Beneficial Insects Introduction Research Laboratory in Newark, Del., sent one or both of the beetles to more than 40 cooperators in about 20 states. Recipients included state departments of agriculture, botanical gardens, zoos and private organizations.

According to Drea, colleague Jack Coulson also at the ARS Insect

Biocontrol Laboratory, Beltsville, had the foresight in 1980 to target euonymus scale as a potential pest that could be controlled with beneficial insects. Other pests targeted by APHIS for research with these predators are white peach scale and San Jose scale.

APHIS plans additional explorations to China, Drea said, “to find cold-hardy races able to withstand our cold northern climate.”

Hank Becker (301) 344-3547

Issued: August 6, 1991

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HONEY PRODUCERS AND IMPORTERS TO VOTE ON CONTINUANCE OF PROMOTION ORDER

WASHINGTON, Aug. 6—U.S. honey producers and importers are voting in a referendum on whether to continue the Honey Research, Promotion and Consumer Information Order—the set of regulations implementing the 1984 Honey Research, Promotion and Consumer Information Act. Daniel D. Haley administrator of the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Agricultural Marketing Service, said the referendum will determine if producers and importers favor continuation of the order, and whether they favor terminating its assessment refund provisions. The voting will end Aug. 31.

The secretary of agriculture will terminate the order if a majority of voting producers and importers do not favor continuing it. An amendment to the 1984 law contained in the 1990 Farm Bill required that a question on whether to terminate the assessment refund provisions be included in the referendum.

To be eligible to vote, participants must be currently producing or importing honey and be on record of having produced or imported honey during 1990. AMS will mail ballots and voting instructions to all honey producers and importers of record. Eligible producers and importers not receiving ballots may request them from their state and county Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service offices.

Notice of the referendum was published in the July 30 Federal Register. Copies are available from Sheila Young, Marketing Order

Administration Branch, Fruit and Vegetable Division, AMS, USDA, Rm. 2525-S, P.O. Box 96456, Washington, D.C. 20090-6456; telephone (202) 475-3930.

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USDA PROPOSES TO CHARGE USER FEES FOR ANIMAL AND PLANT HEALTH SERVICES

WASHINGTON, Aug. 7—The U.S. Department of Agriculture is proposing to charge user fees for certification, inspection and testing services provided under animal and plant health programs.

“User fees are mandated by the 1990 Farm Bill in order to cover the cost of providing these services,” said James W. Glosser, administrator of USDA’s Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service. “The fees are expected to replace an estimated \$38 million in tax dollars each year.”

Services covered by the proposal involve:

—Inspecting airplanes arriving at U.S. airports from foreign locations. Such inspections assure that food and garbage aboard the planes are handled and disposed of safely to avoid introducing foreign plant pests and animal diseases. The proposed fee is \$117.50 per airplane inspection.

—Inspecting airplanes and ships departing Hawaii and Puerto Rico for the U.S. mainland. Such inspections protect mainland agriculture from pests and diseases that exist only in Hawaii and Puerto Rico. The proposed fee is \$37.50 per airplane inspection and \$111 per ship inspection.

—Issuing phytosanitary certificates. These certificates, required by importing countries, indicate that U.S. plants and plant products are substantially free of injurious insects and diseases. The fee would be \$30 for commercial shipments and \$19 for noncommercial shipments.

—Providing special request inspection services, on a permanent, onetime or occasional basis, at locations where APHIS doesn’t have existing inspection facilities. Also, providing inspection services at irregular hours. The amount of this fee would be based on the cost of providing these special services.

Providing quarantine services for animals and birds at APHIS animal import centers. Fees would cover the cost of feed, water, housing, care

and handling—ranging from 75 cents per day for small birds to \$128.50 per day for horses.

—Inspecting and testing animals in privately operated quarantine stations. For example, the fee for a horse in a private, permanent facility would be \$49.25 per day.

—Endorsing health certificates for animals exported from the United States. The proposed fee per certificate ranges from \$2 for poultry to \$10 for slaughter animals; higher fees per certificate are proposed based on the number of animals per certificate and on the number of tests per animal.

—Inspecting animals and birds, primarily to facilitate exports. The proposed fee is \$33.50 per hour for a veterinarian and \$21.50 for an animal health technician.

—Providing laboratory tests and diagnostic reagents used for official tests. Such tests are used for quality control of animal vaccines and other veterinary biologics licensed by APHIS. A fee would be established for each type of test or reagent involved.

Earlier this year, APHIS implemented user fees to cover the cost of inspecting airline passengers arriving from other countries. Fruits, vegetables, meats, plants and agricultural souvenirs brought back by international travelers can harbor dangerous agricultural pests and diseases. Notice of the new user-fee proposal is being published in the today's Federal Register. Comments will be accepted if they are received on or before Sept. 6. An original and three copies of written comments referring to Docket 91-021 should be sent to Chief, Regulatory Analysis and Development; PPD, APHIS, USDA; Rm. 804; Federal Building; 6505 Belcrest Road; Hyattsville, Md. 20782. Comments may be inspected as soon as received at USDA, Rm. 1141-S, 14th Street and Independence Ave. S.W., Washington, D.C., between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except holidays.

Caree Vander Linden (301) 436-7280

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USDA TO AMEND HONEY RESEARCH AND PROMOTION ORDER

WASHINGTON, Aug. 7—The U.S. Department of Agriculture has amended the Honey Research, Promotion and Consumer Information Order to conform with legislation in the 1990 Farm Bill.

Daniel D. Haley, administrator of USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service, said the amendments to the order will:

- provide for exporter representation on the National Honey Board;
- allow existing board members to fulfill their respective terms of office should a realignment of regional production or representation occur;
- allow exemption from paying board assessments only to those who produce, handle or import less than 6,000 pounds of honey, or who donate their honey to charity;
- provide that patents, copyrights, inventions, product formulations or publications developed by the board be the property of the board, and that funds generated from them would benefit the board;
- require USDA's Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service to provide documentation to producers at the time it deducts assessments for the board on honey placed under the federal Honey Price Support Loan Program;
- provide that persons receiving an exemption from paying assessments must maintain certain records; and
- place responsibility for paying assessments directly on the producer whose assessment has not been collected by a first handler (buyer) or ASCS.

These amendments are published in today's Federal Register and are effective immediately.

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